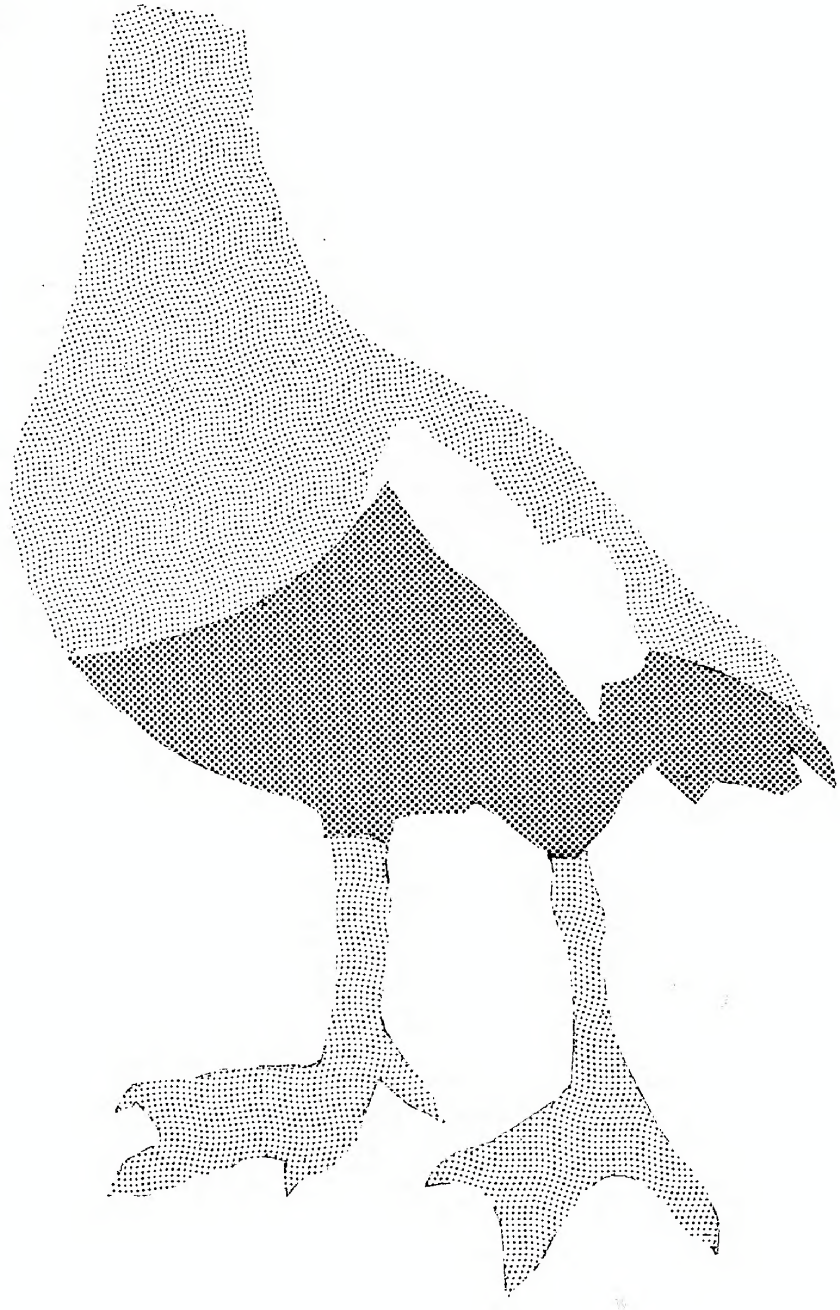
BULLETIN OF THE TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY



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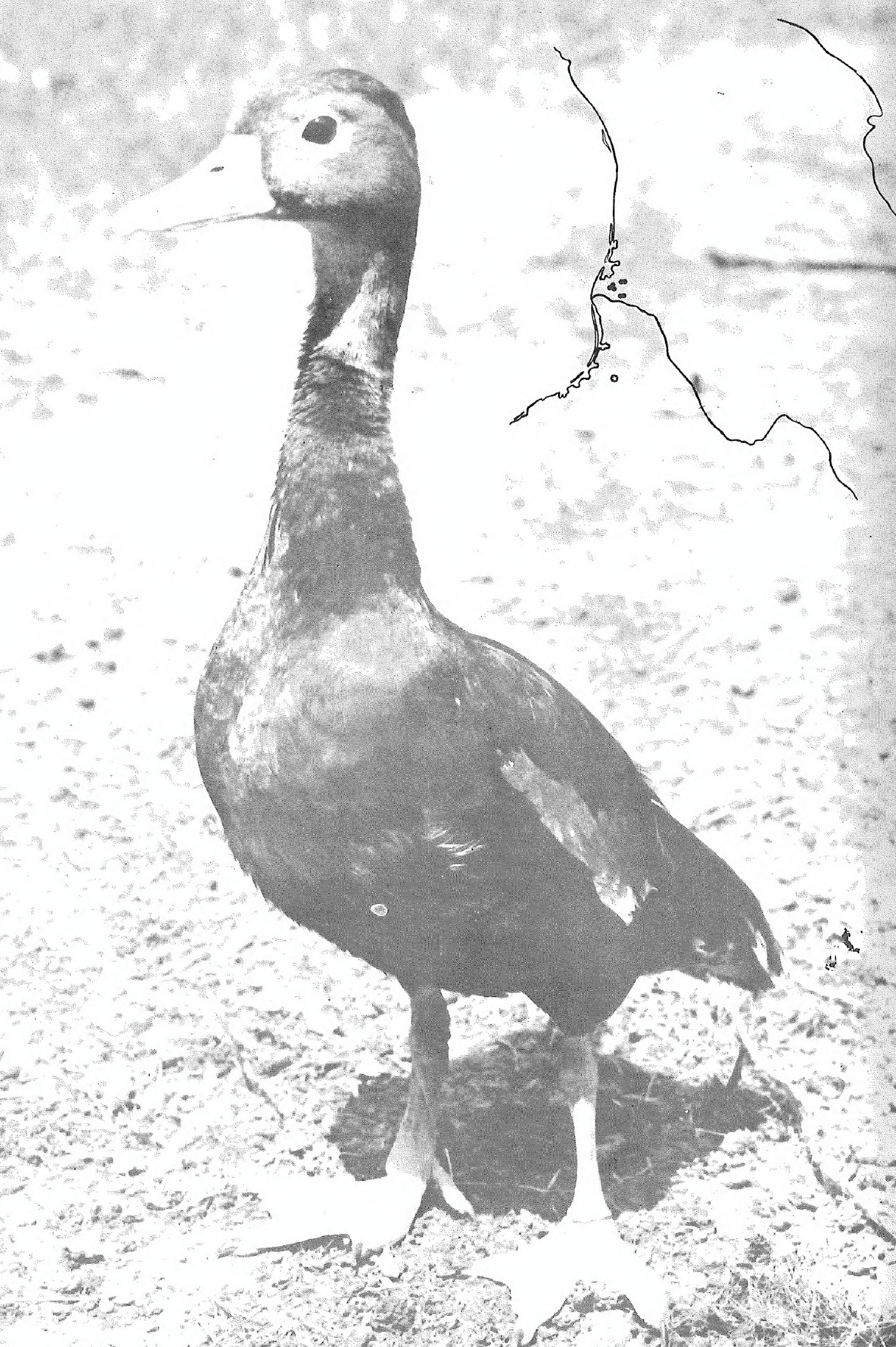

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THE BULLETIN OF THE TOS is mailed to all members of the Texas Ornithological Society not in arrears for dues. Annual dues for active members is $3.00, for sustaining members, $5.00. Inquiries regarding membership should be addressed to W. Russell Weil, Treasurer, Texas Ornithological Society, 3429 Lovers Lane, Dallas, Texas 75225. The BULLETIN is issued ten times a year. Individual issues may be purchased for fifty cents a copy. Original articles, reports and news of interest to TOS members are solicited for inclusion in the BULLETIN. All articles and letters for publication should be submitted to the Editor, Department of Biology, Texas Technological College, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Editorials are by invitation, but the Editor welcomes correspondence and suggestions regarding subject matter. Sight records and regional news should be sent to the appropriate Regional Director for forwarding to the Editor.

BLACK-BELLIED TREE DUCK (Dendrocygna autumnalis)
photographed by E. R. BOGUSCH

TREE DUCK ROUNDUP

ERIC G. BOLEN

Mallards, redheads, Canada geese—these and other waterfowl have for years been of concern to sportsmen and ornithologists alike. Far less known, however, are the eight species of tree ducks found throughout the world's tropical and semi-tropical regions. These birds, related to the swans and geese, are sometimes known as "whistling ducks" because of their distinctive voices; the designations has considerable merit since not all of the species nest, or even perch, in trees.

The species of tree ducks are found in the continental United States. One, the fulvous tree duck, nests in the rice country of Louisiana and eastern Texas. They were once locally abundant near Buena Vista Lake in California, but this population is today markedly reduced if not entirely extirpated. Fulvous tree ducks demonstrate a remarkable world distribution. They are found in both Africa and India as well as North and South America, thus illustrating a classical example of a discontinuous distribution. Recently fulvous tree ducks have also been sighted on the Atlantic seaboard and the upper Mississippi River drainage. The fulvous is one of the tree ducks which seldom, if ever, nests in tree cavities.

The black-bellied tree duck is far more restricted in its distribution. It is found only in the Americas, reaching from northern Argentina to the southern tip of Texas. The northern range limit presently extends to the Lake Mathis region near Corpus Christi. True to its name, the black-bellied tree duck nests primarily in tree cavities, but some instances of ground nests are known.

As a Texas "specialty", the black-bellied tree duck has been of recent interest to wildlife enthusiasts. A lesson has been learned from the past: not long ago, Arthur Cleveland Bent wrote that market hunting had probably contributed to the elimination of tree ducks near Brownsville. Fortunately, black-bellied tree ducks are now fully protected from hunting and their population in Texas appears to be recovering. But more will have to be known if black-bellied tree ducks are to remain a heritage of Texas' rich avifauna. Field studies for this purpose began in 1962 and are continuing today. Several aspects, among them nesting, brood survival, and food habits, have to be considered, however, before the job is finished. Research tools are part of this job.

Banding is a well known and important technique for studying birds. The migratory routes or "flyways" across North America were first described by Frederick C. Lincoln using the recovery locations of banded birds. Similar data, although limited, presently suggest that black-bellied tree ducks nesting in Texas winter in nearby Mexico. Other information is obtained from banded birds, mortality estimates, year-to-year mate retention, and homing tendencies can be determined. But many more tree ducks must be banded before these and other considerations can be fully explored.

Two methods are used to capture black-bellied tree ducks for banding. First, large numbers of these birds can often be trapped

each spring with a cannon-net. This technique employs a large net folded next to a baited site. A series of "cannons", each shooting a projectile attached to the net, is then installed. The operator waits in a blind and electronically fires the cannons when the birds come to feed. The net is carried out and over the tree ducks, harmlessly trapping them beneath. Up to 100 black-bellied tree ducks have been caught in a single morning using this technique. Secondly, incubating tree ducks can be caught on their nests (above figure). This is accomplished by trapping the bird in its nest cavity, but problems can arise when nests are high above the ground. Black-bellied tree ducks respond surprisingly well to this sort of disturbance; only three cases of nest abandonment have resulted from banding incubating tree ducks. Nest banding is particularly useful since each bird can be associated with a certain nest site.

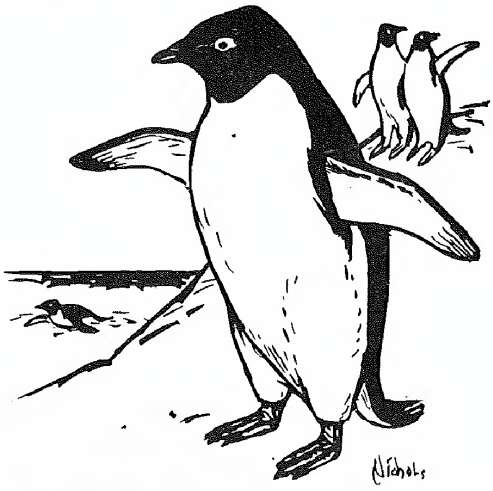
Often it is important to keep track of individual tree ducks. This is possible only if each bird is distinctively marked. Three methods have helped: plastic markers attached to the aluminum leg bands, wing tags, also made of colored plastic, and numbered expansion collars. The collars have proved to be an excellent system for marking geese and they should work equally well on tree ducks. As with the leg and wing tags, the collars have been first tested on captive tree ducks before they are used on wild birds. These markers have helped determine—among other things—the incubation behavior of black-bellied tree ducks. For example, once it was learned that both male and female shared incubation duties, an "index of broodiness" was determined for each sex. This was based on whether or not a bird flushed when its nest was visited by research personnel. In 96 separate visits, 64 percent of the drakes and 62 percent of the hens remained quietly on their eggs. This suggests that drake black-bellied tree ducks are as steeped with "maternal instincts" as are their hens.

(*Continued on page* 14)

REPORTS

★ An adult male Pintail banded in Humbolt County, CALIFORNIA in 1956 was reported taken in 1963 at Baykal Lake, Central Siberian Uplands, RUSSIA.—**Condor,** 69:205,1967.

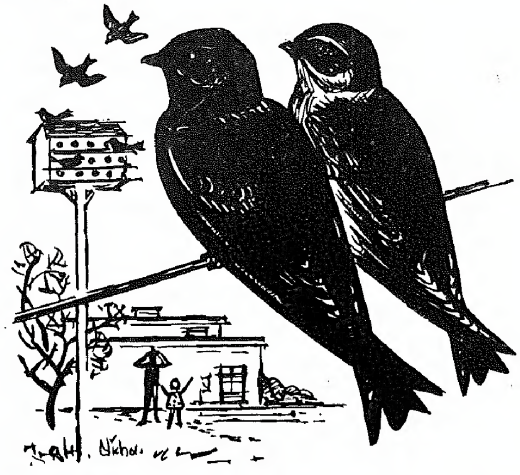
★ Ornithologists working with Adele PENGUINS in the Antarctic transported some birds from coastal rookeries to points several miles away in order to determine their ability to orient themselves and return home. These birds consistently selected a departure direction to the N.N.E.—**Ibis,** 109:99,1967.



★ The following 36 birds are listed as ENDANGERED by the Department of the Interior. "Endangered" is defined as "a species whose prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy". Hawaiian Dark-Rumped Petrel, Hawaiian Goose (Nene), Aleutian Canada Goose, Tule White-Fronted Goose, Laysan Duck, Mexican Duck, Hawaiian Duck (or Koloa), California Condor, Florida Everglade Kite (Florida Snail Kite), Hawaiian Hawk (or Ii), Southern Bald Eagle, Attwater's Greater Prairie Chicken, Masked Bobwhite, Whooping Crane, Yuma Clapper Rail, Hawaiian Common Gallinule, Eskimo Curlew, Puerto Rican Parrot, American Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, Hawaiian Crow (or Alala), Small Kauai Thrush (Puaiohi), Nihoa Millerbird, Kauai Oo (or Oo Aa), Crested Honeycreeper (or Akohekohe), Akiapolaau, Kauai Akialoa, Kauai Nukupuu, Laysan Finchbill (Laysan Finch), Nichoa Finchbill (Nihoa Finch), Ou, Palila, Maui Parrotbill, Bachman's Warbler, Kirtland's Warbler, Dusky Seaside Sparrow, Cape Sable Sparrow.

★ During the last 30 years 24,000 BLACK VULTURES have been trapped, banded and released. Most of them (approximately 22,600) were banded by the late Edward L. McIlhenny of Avery Island, La. In studying and interpretating McIlhenny's records, and some of their own, Paul W. and Barbara Parmalee concluded that many individuals within a local population wander over an area of considerable size, probably within a 100- to 200 mile radius. The evidence also indicates that occasional fluctuations and local abundance are influenced by local food supplies.—**Condor,** 69:146,1967.

★ In a study of the food habits of the PURPLE MARTIN, R. F. Johnson compared stomach contents with netted samples of flying inescts and found that maximal availability of food coincided with maximal energy requirements of Purple Martins (August), the time these birds initiate molt, accumulate fat, and begin migration.—**Ibis,** 1967.



★ The history, distribution, abundance, behavior and ecology of the Horned Guan in Mexico and Guatemala has been studied in detail by Robert F. Andrle.—**Condor,** 69:93,1967.

★ Until recently the OLDEST reported BIRD in the wild has been a 31 year, 11 month old Herring Gull, which was banded and captured in Europe. In 1966, however, a group of Girl Scouts found a Herring Gull in Michigan which was banded in 1930, making the bird 36 years old when it died. — **Auk, 84:123, 1967.**

★ The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department noted in areas lacking moisture that BOBWHITE hens search for food instead of nesting. Recent rainfall in some areas is expected to enable them to launch into reproduction activity.—**Texas Parks and Wildlife News.**

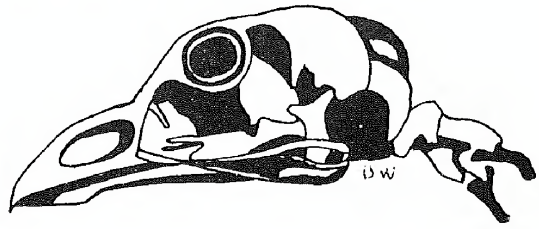
★ Although CLIFF SWALLOWS sometimes add mud to old bank swallow burrows, apparently it is quite rare for them to actually dig burrows, themselves. Abbot and Sandra Gaunt, at Middlebury College, Vermont, have reported and described their observations of this species' actually excavating nesting cavities.—**Wilson Bull., 79:110, 1967.**

★ The HOUSE SPARROW spread 1000 miles or more in three different directions after being first recorded in the Orange Free State, South-Central Africa, in 1949.—**Arnoldia, 2:1-17, 1966.**

★ Most people are familiar with broken-wing acts and other distraction displays or diversionary behavior which nesting birds engage in when their nest is approached by an intruder. Few ornithologists have studied this behavior systematically. Anthony Gramza, in a recent study of the COMMON NIGHTHAWK, collected detailed information concerning the responses given by this species. He found, for instance, that the most conspicuous responses occurred at and shortly after hatching, and that at these times the birds waited longer before leaving the nest.—**Auk, 84:72, 1967.**

★ Ducks, like most birds, resort to a variety of movements to become comfortable while resting. Frank McKinney at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, studied the COMFORT MOVEMENTS in 114 species of ducks and classified these movements into seven broad categories: shaking movements, stretching movements, cleaning movements, oiling preening, nibbling preening, washing, and bathing.—**Behaviour, 25:120, 1966.**

★ Frederick R. Gehlbach of Baylor University has published information on three species of warblers in Texas, the Colima Warbler (nesting data), Golden-cheeked Warbler (distribution notes), and Black-throated Gray Warbler (distribution notes).—**Southwestern Naturalist, 12:109, 1967.**



★ Fifteen species of FOSSIL birds from MILLER'S CAVE, Llano County have been recently identfiied by R. D. Weigel, Illinois State University. Most of the species identified are common migrants or residents in Texas today, but one, **Protocitta dixi,** the first known extinct jay, was an exciting discovery because it also occurred in Florida. Its presence in this cave is further evidence of the similarity in Pleistocene faunas of Florida and Texas.—**Texas Journal of Science 29:107, 1967.**

NEWS . . .

APRIL

6 Thirty-eighth annual meeting of the **Cooper Ornithological Society** at Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Santa Barbara, Calif. Program included trips to see White-tailed Kites and California Condor.

11 **Mrs. Virgil Martin** speaks about wild flowers at Tyler (Tyler Aud. Soc.)

19 **W. Caleb Glazener** speaks about wild turkeys at Lubbock (Lubbock Aud. Soc.)

20 **J. R. Cox** speaks on cacti at Corpus Christi Outdoor Club.

21 Professor W. K. Davis and Ned Fritz entered **Ezell's Cave,** near San Marcos, to determine the ecological status of the endemic **Texas Blind Salamander** and other cave fauna. Since the cave was sealed with a steel lid for several years, troglobites suffered because bats could not utilize the cave and deposit guano, the principal source of energy for the food chain. Texas Nature Conservancy is raising money to buy the cave as a sanctuary.

25 Film, "The Murder of Silence" (Dallas County Aud. Soc.)

28 Spring Meeting of **Oklahoma Ornithological Society** at Wichita Mnts. Wildlife Refuge.

29 Spring Meeting of **Louisiana Ornithological Society** at Cameron.

MAY

1 Alexander Sprunt and John M. Anderson (National Audubon Society) flew to Austin to testify on pending legislation which would restrict shell-dredging. **Vingt'un Island,** the Audubon Society's sanctuary near Galveston, has N. America's largest colony of Roseate Spoonbills, and is threatened by shell-dredging.

2 **Howard Dodgen,** Executive Director of the Texas Wildlife Fund, speaks at Annual Banquet of San Antonio Aud. Soc. ("Conservation of Wildlife in Texas")

5 Spring Meeting of **Arkansas Audubon Society** at Petit Jean Mountain, near Morrilton.

6 Final Meeting of **Ft. Worth Audubon Society,** a picnic after the field trip, with installation of new officers (Mrs. Robert L. Edens, incoming president.)

9 **Charles W. Hamilton** speaks at Annual Business Meeting of Houston Outdoor Nature Club.

15 **Jerry Mullican,** superintendent at Palo Duro Canyon speaks at the Texas Panhandle Aud. Soc.

16 **Mrs. S. J.** (Verna) **Dukes** of Fort Worth lectures on Texas wild flowers to Dallas County Aud. Soc.

18 Mr. and Mrs. **L. T. Adams** speak at picnic supper (Travis Aud. Soc.)

21 **Joseph S. Medeiros,** wildlife expert from Hawaii speaks at Dallas County Aud. Soc. (tentative date).

FIELD TRIPS . . .

APRIL

15 Deadman's Pool, **Dripping Springs** (Travis Aud. Soc.): 52 species recorded by 20 participants.
North **Smith County** (Tyler Aud. Soc.): Approx. 60 species recorded by 11 participants.

16 Kirschke Ranch, **Boerne** (San Antonio Aud. Soc.): 41 species recorded by 26 participants.
Midland and vicinity (Midland Nat.)

22 **Tyler** and vicinity (Tyler Aud. Soc.)
Pollard Ranch, **San Marcos** (Tra- Aud. Soc.)

23 **Beaumont,** High Island and vicinity Spring Count: 171 species recorded.
Dallas and vicinity (Dallas County Aud. Soc.)

28 **Tyler** and vicinity Spring Count: 134 species recorded by 15 participants.

29 **Austin** and vicinity (T.A.S.)
Wichita Wildlife Refuge (Oklahoma Orn. Soc.)

30 **Amarillo** and vicinity (Texas Panhandle Aud. Soc.)
Big Day Migration County, **Midland** County (Mid. Nat.): 143 species recorded by 11 participants.

MAY

4 **Kountze** (Hardin Co.) and vicinity Spring Count: 86 species recorded by 4 participants.

6 Fort Worth Spring Count (Ft. Worth Aud. Soc.)
Austin and vicinity (Travis Aud. Soc.)

7 **Midland** and vicinity (Mid. Nat.)
Bexar Co. Spring Roundup (San Antonio Aud. Soc.)

13 **Houston** and vicinity (Outdoor Nature Club): "Shoreline Botany" by Sue Harris.
White Rock Lake (Dallas) and vicinity (Dallas County Aud. Soc.)

20 **Austin** and vicinity (Travis Aud. Soc.)
Comfort and vicinity (San Antonio Aud. Soc.)

21 **Dallas** and vicinity (D.C.A.S.)

27 **Galveston** (Houston Outdoor Nature Club)

FALL MEETING, RIO GRANDE VALLEY, NOV. 24TH AND 25TH

SPRING MEETING, MAY 4TH AND 5TH, 1968
McKITTRICK CANYON, GUADALUPE MT. NAT. PARK

GUEST EDITORIAL:

From Dams to Desalting: Part Two

EDWARD FRITZ

The Texas Water Plan, as originally proposed in tentative form in June, 1965, makes no provisions for desalting the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Instead, the Plan would divert the waters of the Sulphur River and Cypress Creek in East Texas all the way to the Rio Grande Valley, 980 miles by canal and pipeline.

This diversion phase of the Plan was set up as the FIRST order of priority. Thus the greatest ruination of the rivers would be accomplished in the very years during which we should expect the greatest breakthrough in desalting. The diversion project is largely with a purpose of supplying more irrigation water to South Texas, but need for additional irrigation land in Texas during the next ten years has been established. It stands to reason that the diversion project should be given the LAST rank of priority, if it is retained at all.

The engineers have done so much bragging about the immensity of the diversion plan, called the Texas Water Project, that one wonders if their motivation in giving this project first priority is to accomplish a famous engineering feat, instead of to adopt a balanced water plan.

Texas can gain a more lasting fame by instituting the first great plan to meet the water demands of a state through the desalting route. Let our ditching engineers give way to our chemical engineers, or help the chemical engineers build desalting plants and pipelines.

California is installing a desalting plant big enough (50 million gallons per day) to meet the needs of San Diego at an estimated cost of only 22 cents per thousand gallons.

Texas had one of the early desalting plants at Freeport. Modern scientific desalting is much cheaper, and is becoming cheaper by the year as chemical advances accelerate, and as atomic power, which energizes such plants, becomes more and more economical. Desalting is not yet cheap enough for irrigation water, but we do not yet need an additional supply of irrigation water. By the time we need it, desalting may be economical enough to supply it.

Fortunately, the Texas Water Plan, initially published in June, 1966, was withdrawn in September. The Texas Water Development Board, at the time of withdrawing the Plan, included a proposal for completing the study with Southwest Research Institute and the Office of Saline Water of The Potential Contribution of Desalting to Future Water Supply in Texas.

In February, 1967, the Board released the Report of the Southwest Research Institute, which is based in Houston. In the four-volume report, W. Lawrence Prehn, Jr., Director of the Department of Applied Economics, and Robert A. Sifatoos, his assistant, named eleven Texas cities as "representative of those which could benefit from future use of a desalting plant": Beeville, Dell City, El Paso,

Fort Stockton, Freer, Hebbronville, Italy, Kingsville, Port Mansfield, Rankin, and Refugio.

"In each, the unit cost for desalting water has been found to be less than or about the same as the unit cost for water from conventional sources," state Prehn and Sifatoos in the Report. The experts also recommend further study of nine cities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. They eliminated 17 cities from further consideration.

An encouraging factor about the Report is that the researchers based their findings on relative CURRENT costs, without anticipating reductions in the cost of desalting. All we need to do to strengthen the case for desalting is to anticipate the much lower cost of desalting ten years from now. At the 12 cents per thousand gallons anticipated by Mr. DiLuzio, every large city in Texas may soon find nuclear desalting to be less expensive than conventional power plants and dams as a source of energy and water.

Now let us further strengthen the case for desalting by adding another dimension of value—the value of natural areas. Dam engineers and the Southwest Research Institute do not yet place a monetary value on unspoiled environment. However, many environmental planners are joining a huge army of conservationists in placing a high value on irreplaceable ecosystems and wildernesses.

Dams and ditches destroy natural areas. Desalting plants are far more concentrated, doing little damage to the environment. Especially when the desalting plant is near or over the sea or gulf, as at San Diego, and discharges the salt close by, the plant does little damage to the environment.

The wisest course for Texas is to postpone the Texas Water Plan long enough for us to develop a substitute state-wide desalting plan. Through such a postponement, we can probably save the 2,500,000 acres otherwise destroyed for inundation by outmoded dams, and the additional thousands of acres destined for destruction by the heavy equipment that covers the earth in erecting dams and in building the roads that lead to dams.

During our moratorium on dams, we should continue to observe the progress of desalting in other states and nations until we realize that desalting has become cheaper, in the long run, than ruining our rivers.

It is absolutely imperative that we immediately de-emphasize dams, ditches and diversion, and convert our water plans to desalting, the best current and long-range answer to our water supply problems.

UNUSUAL FEEDING BEHAVIOR OF LOUISIANA HERON

(*Hydranassa tricolor*)

On January 7, 1966, Dr. Keith Arnold and I noticed an unusual feeding behavior by a Louisiana Heron (*Hydranassa tricolor*) and a Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*). The two birds were seen in a drainage ditch south of Matagorda, Tex. in Matagorda Co. The merganser was swimming along in search of fish, and the heron was stalking alongside the merganser. When the merganser would stop, the heron would stretch forward and attempt to catch the merganser's prey.—*Terry C. Maxwell, Box* 6697, *Texas A&M University, College Station, Tex.*

GANNET (Morus bassanus) FOUND ON TEXAS COAST

On April 2, 1967, Dr. Keith Arnold and I found a specimen of the Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) washed up on the beach in Jefferson Co., Texas. It was 9 mi. east of High Island. The bird had evidently died at sea and washed in at least 2 weeks previous to our finding it. It was in adult plumage and the white tail feathers were still present.—*Terry C. Maxwell, Box* 6697, *Texas A&M University, College Station, Tex.*

OLA DUBLIN HAYNES, 1902-1967

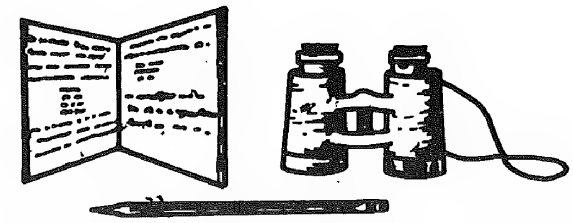
Ola Dublin Haynes was a native of Midland and lived there most of her life. When she joined the Midland Naturalists in 1956, the club consisted of about 15 birders, and THE PHALAROPE was in its infancy. When Ola died of a heart attack on April 13, 1967, there were 320 members who lived in all parts of the United States, THE PHALAROPE was in its 12th year of publication, the MIDNATS had sponsored seven successful Audubon Wildlife Film seasons, and a sanctuary fund had been established. During these years, Ola was the source of inspiration and enthusiasm which kept the MIDNATS growing. She stayed always in the background, but it was her leadership and personality which held the group together and provided the impetus.

Ola maintained a fabulous back-yard bird sanctuary which attracted many rare migrants. Whenever a new species appeared, she called every member of the MIDNATS to come enjoy it with her. She was an expert field birder, and was adept at showing her finds to others. She found the first Groove-billed Anis for Midland, and managed to continue finding them every day for a week until she had shown them to over 20 birders.

Ola's deep and abiding love for every living thing in God's world will never be forgotten by those who had the privilege of knowing her.

—Frances Williams

SIGHT RECORDS



Fred Webster, Frances Williams, SIGHT RECORD EDITORS

REGION I: FOX SPARROW, March 19, Buffalo Lake (Kenneth Seyffert); VIOLET GREEN SWALLOW, March 28, Buffalo Lake (Rena Ross, Esther ★ Waddill, Vera Deason, and Peggy Acord); BULLOCK'S ORIOLE, April 1 (Kathryn Whipple); EVENING GROSBEAKS, April 3, Ellwood Park, Amarillo (Peggy Acord, Esther Waddill, and Rena Ross); GRAY-HEADED JUNCO, April 18 and 24, Buffalo Lake (Kenneth Seyffert); two BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLERS, April 26, Buffalo Lake (Kenneth Seyffert); CATBIRD, April 29, Buffalo Lake (Kenneth Seyffert and Leo Galloway); two VERDINS, March 26, Palo Duro Canyon State Park; first nesting record for area (Kenneth Seyffert); three VIOLET GREEN SWALLOWS, April 9, Buffalo Lake (Kenneth Seyffert).

REGION II: WESTERN GREBE, March 17, 18, and 21, Lake Benbrook; first record for Tarrant County (Midge Randolph and Ethel Bowman); ★ CATTLE EGRET, March 23, State Fish Hatchery, Eagle Mountain Lake (Ethel Bowman and Inez Wetsel); CINNAMON TEAL, (date unknown), observed in Dallas and Tarrant Counties (numerous observers); 40 CATTLE EGRETS, April 12, White Rock Lake, Dallas (numerous observers); YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD, April 15, Heard Refuge, McKinney (Dallas Audubon members); 40 MISSISSIPPI KITES, April 30, Garland (Mr. and Mrs. Don Kyle).

REGION III: KENTUCKY WARBLER, April 20, Midland (T.S. Jones and Charles Henderson).

REGION V: Two MOUNTAIN PLOVERS, March 19, Bexar County (Gerald Harding and Grady Loftin); BAR-TAILED GODWIT, April 9, Palmetto State ★ Park (Charles R. Bender and David Wolf); about 1000 WHITE PELICANS, March 28, Austin (Mary Anne McClendon); HEPATIC TANAGER, April 13, Austin; county first (Jack Albright); four WHITE-FACED IBISES, April 24, Austin (David Simon); 123 MISSISSIPPI KITES, April 28, Austin (David Simon); BREWSTER'S WARBLER, May 3, Austin (David Simon); CERULEAN WARBLER, May 3, Austin (Roswell Miller); GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER, May 4, Austin (Marie Webster); 500 YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS, May 3, Austin, (David Simon); MAGNOLIA, KENTUCKY, and CERULEAN WARBLERS, May 5, H. T. Roper Ranch, Marble Falls (Mr. and Mrs. E.B. Kinsey, Mrs. Roper); 200 WHITE PELICANS, May 4, Austin (E.B. Kinsey).

REGION VI: RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, April 1, Bastrop State Park (John W. White); 5 WHISTLING SWANS, December 15-March 24, ★ Meridian State Park, Waco; county first (A.F. Bennett); 10 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS, May 2, Lake Waco; county first (A.F. Bennett); 7 MARBLED GODWITS, April 26, Lake Waco; county first (A.F. Bennett); LAPLAND LONGSPURS, January-February, Del Mar Ranch, N. of Waco (A.F. Bennett).

REGION VIII: BLACK-HEADED ORIOLE, April 27, Galveston (Dr. Dave Marrack); CAPE MAY WARBLER, April 23, Beaumont, High Island, Boli- ★ var Peninsula, Anahauc Wildlife Refuge and surrounding areas (Ornithology Group of Houston Outdoor Nature Club); BLACKPOLL WARBLER, April 23, Beaumont, High Island, Bolivar Peninsula, Anahauc Wildlife Refuge and surrounding areas (O.G. of Houston).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE HUDSONIAN GODWIT AS A TEXAS BIRD

A list of birds characteristic of Texas might include the Golden-cheeked and Colima Warblers, the Attwater Prairie Chicken, Whooping Crane and any one of those specialties of the Rio Grande Valley. But equally deserving of a place on this list is the Hudsonian Godwit, of which almost 100% of its total world population passes through our state each year during the spring migration. In fact, there is probably a day or two during the first part of May when well over half of these birds are in Texas.

The Hudsonian Godwit is certainly a rare bird. At one time its numbers were estimated at only two thousand. This number may be based on incomplete coverage of its Arctic nesting range and a lack of any systematic census during the spring migration. But the fact remains that it does have a relatively small population and is not seen with any degree of regularity, even in its migratory flyway. This may be due to three causes. The first is the paucity of numbers. The second is its habit of migrating in flocks, both fall and spring; so often most of the birds in an area at any one time are clustered in large groups and are more apt to be overlooked than if they were evenly dispersed. The third factor is the speed with which this species completes its spring migration. It is literally here today and gone tomorrow, with hardly more than a day or two spent at any one locality en route. This is in distinct contrast to a bird such as the Golden Plover which has similar migratory pathways but is present for at least a two month period on the Texas coast each spring. Perhaps a fourth factor is that the Hudsonian Godwit is a May bird on the Texas coast and some observers have given up on the spring migration by the time this bird arrives. All of this makes its discovery a real challenge to the bird watcher.

Unfortunately, this report must be ended on a discouraging note; and that note concerns what may be happening to the Hudsonian Godwit during its brief passage through our state. It has been widely observed that during migration these birds frequent rice fields, especially along the coastal strip. These are the same rice fields from which such birds as the Fulvous Tree Duck have been eliminated by the use of Aldrin and other insecticides as a seed coating, along with the direct application of herbicides and other pesticides to the ground. The godwits encounter this situation preparatory to the nesting season, just as the gonads are beginning maximum enlargement and activity. It is to be hoped they do not respond to this like the Bald Eagle and others, that is, through infertility and the production of eggs which will not hatch. This is something which should be looked for by those few observers on the bird's nesting ground.

William J. Graber III, M.D.

Pres. Texas Ornithological Society

COLIMA WARBLER CENSUS

★ Ninety-two Colima Warblers were found in Big Bend's Chisos Mountains during a May 12 to 15 census, according to Park Superintendent Perry E. Brown.

★ Found nowhere else in the United States, the Colima Warbler is considered to be one of America's rarest birds. Yet very little is known about its life habits and abundance. Chief Park Naturalist Roland H. Wauer organized the count in an initial effort to learn more about this species. Counters helping Wauer included Ranger-naturalist Dick Nelson, Midland Naturalist members Frances Williams, Anne LeSassier, Ted Jones and John Galley, Dallas Attorney Edward Fritz, Dr. Kent Rylander of Texas Tech, and Dr. Jon Barlow and Jim Dick of the University of Toronto, who are currently studying Gray Vireos in the Big Bend.

★ Naturalist Wauer said that Colima Warblers were found among the oaks and maples from the top of the Chisos (Emory Peak, 7,835') down to 5,700 feet in the cooler canyons. One of the few warblers that nests on the ground, it builds a grass-covered nest in inconspicuous places on grassy slopes.

★ The ten counters recorded all birds seen during the four-day period. A total of 143 species were found, of which a number are considered rare for western Texas. Such unexpected birds seen included the Mississippi Kite, Yellow-throated Vireo, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. — Roland Wauer, *Chief Naturalist, Big Bend National Park, Texas.*

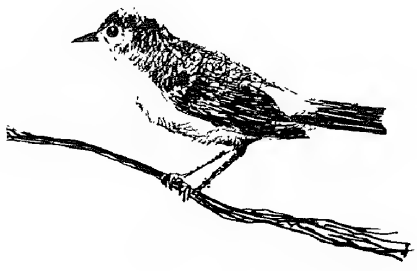
TEXAS FLOWERS IN NATURAL COLORS

By Dr. Eula Whitehouse
Texian Press—228pp—$5.00

★ To the delight of many of us this much needed book, written and illustrated by Dr. Whitehouse, is being re-published, with improved binding and plates. It contains 180 colored plates depicting 257 wild flowers of Texas and the Southwest. Diagrams illustrate terms used in plant identification, and family characteristics are placed immediately below the illustrations.

★ Take this book with you on a picnic, a drive out in the country to see a friend—on all jaunts large or small, and if there are children along, teach them a flower or two. You may be creating a hobby that will last all their lives. A love of nature is a fundamental thing that can help us through our urban, plastic-wrapped world. You find completely different flowers in widely separated areas of the state. You may perhaps become interested in their medical and household uses. Our plants are tied into the lives of the Indians and pioneers—and Grandma could not have done without them.

★ Dr. Whitehouse, a widely known botanist, has studied, taught, and collected plants in Texas for many years.—Iris McDermott, *Austin, Texas.*



Green Kingfisher Country

JAMES C. HENDERSON

No enthusiastic Texas birder should overlook the Pecos River valley in west Texas and its interesting variety of bird life. The river, although somewhat brackish, provides water in an otherwise dry country. Heavy cover is available along the banks and high cliffs flank the valley in its lower reaches. One of the few easily accessible stretches is between the towns of Iraan and Sheffield. It is from this area that Christmas Counters from Midland, Texas reported twenty-one Green Kingfishers on the 1965-66 Sheffield Christmas Count.

The best birding spots are along the dirt road which follows the river on the Crockett County side. Although shown in places as unimproved, the road is good and should be passable in almost any weather except during and immediately after heavy showers which may close low water crossings in the side canyons and draws.

To gain access from Sheffield, turn north at the first graded dirt road east of the Pecos River bridge on Highway 290 between Ozona and Sheffield. To come from the north, leave Iraan and drive east on Highway 29; then turn south on the first dirt road east of the Pecos River bridge. Signs at several points along the river road indicate that the lands are private, but the road receives county maintenance and is open to the public. It is best to stay on the road or walk along the river, however, especially during the spring lambing season. There are a few cattle guards, but no gates at present.

In places the road follows the course of the river very closely under high cliffs. Elsewhere it swings away as much as one-half mile. There are unmapped oil field lease roads in the area. If in doubt as to how to proceed, keep to the road closest to the river and retrace your path if it proves to be a dead end. The river can be followed the entire distance between Highways 290 and 29, or it can be crossed on any of several bridges on dirt roads which connect to Highway 349 between Sheffield and Iraan. The best birding will usually be found between Highway 290 and the first bridge upstream, or the southern one-half of the mapped area.

To reach another interesting place, drive eastward from Sheffield towards Ozona. Some three and one-half miles east of the Pecos River, before one reaches the ruins of Fort Lancaster and begins to climb Lancaster Hill, a dirt road leaves Highway 290 on the west side of the unmarked bridge over Live Oak Creek, which is usually dry at this point. It runs north paralleling the course of the stream. Within several miles it passes through two large groves of Live Oaks which offer excellent birding. In the thickest brush along dry tributary draws, Crissal Thrashers have been seen.

A short distance beyond the groves, the road crosses Live Oak Creek at a low water crossing. If birders unfamiliar with the roads continue farther, unmapped ranch and oil field lease roads may prove confusing. It is best to return the way you came although it is possible to reach the river road by continuing.

Accommodations between Ozona, forty miles to the east of Sheffield, and Fort Stockton, seventy miles to the west, are limited.

(Reprinted from The Phalarope, April, 1966.)

—*Box* 5132, *Midland, Texas* 79701

(*Continued from Page* 3)

Marking techniques are not limited to adult tree ducks. Much can be learned when the young birds are marked for later identification. One might ask if young black-bellied tree ducks return as adults to nest where they were hatched the year before. Since the young birds are too small for wing tags or collars, and since they would quickly outgrow metal leg bands, other marking methods are required. Hence, small serially numbered tags (designed for the gill coverings of fish fingerlings) are inserted in their webs. These remain in place without jeopardizing the bird's movements. Results of this program are still preliminary, but at least 13 percent of the young tree ducks have returned to their place of origin. The actual percentage may be even higher, since the returning birds may represent nearly all of those still alive by the following year.

No state awakened to the values of tourism, aesthetics, and conservation can long afford to neglect any facet of its natural resources. A regrettable destruction of non-game birds and their habitat has too often been recognized too late. The day will hopefully come when an accumulation of data will insure the black-bellied tree duck's continued presence in Texas. Continued application of research techniques may indeed hasten that day's arrival.

—*Assistant Professor, Department of Range and Wildlife Management, Texas Technological College, Lubbock, Texas* 79409

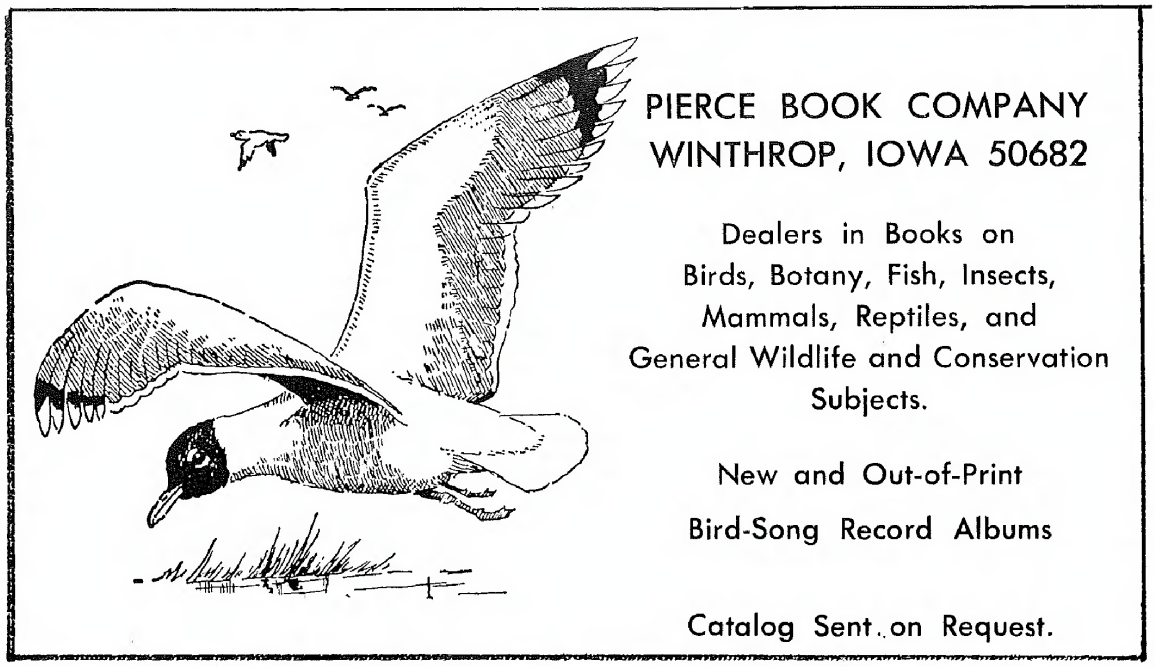
RECENT BOOKS

Gould, John. BIRDS OF EUROPE. 321 pp. Barnes & Noble. 1967. $15.00.

Allen, Glover Morrill. BIRDS AND THEIR ATTRIBUTES. 338 pp. Illus. Dover Publications, Inc.: New York. 1966. $1.85 (reprinted)

Austing, G. Ronald, and John B. Holt, Jr. THE WORLD OF THE GREAT HORNED OWL. 158 pp. Illus. J. B. Lippincott Company: Philadelphia and New York. 1966. $4.95.

Leopold, A. Starker. FAUNA SILVESTRE DE MEXICO. 655pp. Illus. Instituto Mexicano de Recursos Naturales Renovables: Mexico. 1965.



NOTICES

The Editor extends an invitation to wildlife photographers to submit PHOTOGRAPHS of birds for inclusion in the TOS BULLETIN. Prints or negatives of any size may be submitted, and they will be returned after publication.

During 1966 the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife conducted a BREEDING BIRD SURVEY in states east of the Mississippi River. This year the survey will include Texas.

Each survey route follows a 25-mile course to be driven by automobile and only one trip is made during June. Anyone interested in contributing to this study should contact Willet T. Van Velzen, Migratory Bird Populations Station, Laurel, Maryland 20810. Since the censuses begin in June, it is urgent that you contact him immediately.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Denver Wildlife Research Laboratory, is studying the recent decline of FULVOUS TREE DUCKS in an attempt to evaluate the extent of pesticide hazards with respect to this species. This bureau requests help in determining present numbers, spring arrival dates, concentration points, and possible nesting locations. If you can contribute information, please contact Mr. Edward L. Flickinger, Wildlife Research Biologist, P. O. Box 2506, Victoria, Texas.

The forty-eighth Annual Meeting of the WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY will be held at the Crawford House, Crawford Notch, New Hampshire, from Thursday, June 15, to Sunday, June 18, 1967.

The eighty-fifth stated meeting of the AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION will meet in Toronto, Canada, from Monday, August 21 to Friday, August 25, 1967.

The 33rd NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE and Natural Resources Conference will be held next year at the Shamrock Hilton Hotel, Houston, Texas, on March 11, 12, and 13, according to the Wildlife Management Institute, sponsor of the international conservation meeting.

Marcus Mullings, 1401 Cedar Crest Drive, Abilene, is organizing a survey of nesting MISSISSIPPI KITES in North and West Texas and wishes to contact persons interested in participating either by helping with the survey or by supplying him with information.

EDITORIAL:

BIRDWATCHERS VERSUS EGO-WATCHERS

ANYONE WHO HAS PAUSED to gaze into a clear, calm woodland pool has noticed two reflections—one of the surrounding trees, grasses and birds; and the other of himself.

Just how long a person spends looking at his own image varies, but it is possible to become so fascinated with one's reflection that for all practical purposes the reflections of nature are excluded from one's vision. Nature's call for attention is reduced to a mere echo, and for all the response the person gives nature, the person might just as well be some sort of flower growing by the water's edge.

We cannot observe nature without, quite legitimately, seeing ourselves as well. We are not uninvolved, dispassionate observers of nature, and it is hardly to be expected that in studying birds, for instance, we will see only birds, and not ourselves, also. It is tragic, however, when all of our attention is directed to ourselves. It is at this time when we are more appropriately called "ego-watchers" instead of "birdwatchers."

For ego-watchers, a bird walk is quite an ordeal, in spite of their ability to convince themselves that it is otherwise. They are constantly defending their ego with successful identifications. Misidentifying a bird in front of others may result in a mood of serious depression. In more extreme cases, they cannot accept the fact of failure in knowing something; nor can they accept criticism from others. The bird has taken second place to the ego, and seems almost incidental to the bird walk; it is just an object which the ego-watchers utilize to feed their egos.

Less obvious, perhaps, are the modest ego-watchers. They see themselves as humble, honest and unpretentious. They would not dare appear as over-confident or sensitive bird identifiers—they admire themselves because they are sweet and gentle and are not compelled to protect their ego. Yet they, too, are ego-watchers; for if anyone threatened their image of the non-aggressive, modest birdwatchers, they, too, might become depressed. In fact, it might sometimes be to their ego's advantage NOT to identify a bird correctly now and then.

In contrast to the ego-watcher, the birdwatcher takes as his object the bird, not his ego. He may respond to birds as a child; he may get excited over birds regardless of his knowledge or lack of knowledge or of the image which he conveys to people. His ego plays a relatively small role. Since he is not greedy for prestige or approval, he can relate to nature in a free and spontaneous manner. In a certain sense, seeing a house sparrow, for example, is as exciting as seeing a Kirtland's warbler. The birdwatcher is not tethered by the inexorable demands of an ego and can therefore experiment with different ways of responding to nature, even unsophisticated and inelegant ways, if he feels so inclined. When an unfamiliar bird flies in front of him and his fellow birders, instead of feeling a nauseating, sinking feeling in his intestines, he responds with excitement.

It is to miss the point of this editorial to criticize or stand in judgement of the ego-watcher. His deprivation is his nemesis, and this is severe enough.—M.K.R.